



February 6, 2019

Via Electronic Submission

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW, Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: *Ex Parte* Communication
Hurricane Michael Preparation and Response, PS Docket No. 18-339**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On February 4, 2019, Rodney Cooper and the undersigned from Sprint Corporation ("Sprint") met with Jeff Goldthorp, Michael Caiafa, John Healy, Michael Connelly, Justin Cain, Ryan Hedgpeth and Renee Roland (by teleconference) from the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau ("Bureau") to discuss questions the Bureau had about Sprint's response to Hurricane Michael. Craig Sherry, Greg Holzapfel, Scott Fitzgerald, Lee Garriss and Cary Truley from Sprint also joined by teleconference. The meeting was held at the request of Bureau staff.

At the outset, Sprint reiterated its strong desire following natural disasters to bring its wireless network and services back up as soon as possible, not only to serve its subscribers, but also to help provide communications to public safety first responders on the ground. We also lauded the spirit of collaboration and cooperation that occurs between wireless carriers impacted by an event, due in part to Sprint's early commitment to the Wireless Network Resiliency Cooperative Framework. Our views are also summarized on the record in comments we filed to the FCC Public Notice in the above-referenced docket on December 17, 2018.

Specific to Hurricane Michael restoration efforts, Bureau staff asked if Sprint was familiar with descriptions of excessive time waiting in vehicular traffic once the public was allowed back into the area impacted by the storm and what Sprint personnel may have experienced. Sprint confirmed that traffic was indeed a significant factor during disaster recovery as it caused delays in moving repair crews and equipment around the vicinity and, more importantly, prevented technicians from being able to access cell sites in a timely manner. Traffic was much more of a factor following Hurricane Michael than it has been for other storms, perhaps due to limited ingress and egress routes in that part of the country.

Bureau staff also asked about the percentage of wireless coverage restoration that may have been provided through the use of satellite-based cell sites-on-light-trucks ("SatCOLT's"). Sprint explained that, in general, SatCOLT's are brought in to provide wireless coverage where none is available at one specific point in time and that it would be very difficult to determine an accurate coverage percentage for any particular place at a given time or date. While we could attempt to arrive at some type of estimate from any available historical data, it would necessarily be based on guesswork. We clarified that SatCOLT's are often moved during a disaster recovery scenario and

sometimes several times within a relatively short period of time, especially as macro network coverage cell sites begins to restore.

In addition, FCC staff was interested in the decision process behind deployment of temporary microwave links that can allow for more immediate restoration of wireless telecommunications in the short term, as well as a comparison to the speed and capability of traditional fiber backhaul. We explained the need to maintain close communication with backhaul providers for current status of restoration efforts, as we try to avoid deploying microwave backhaul at a site only to have fiber backhaul restored shortly thereafter. During restoration efforts, it is important to utilize assets very carefully and strategically. Following Hurricane Michael, it became apparent that Bay County, Florida, in particular, would not have backhaul restored for some time, so Sprint actively pursued a strategy to deploy microwave backhaul links in the most effective manner. Once microwave is in place, it must also be managed for performance and capacity degradation depending on how many cell sectors it is serving and how much wireless traffic is being carried. While other techniques can be implemented, it is always preferable to bring up fiber backhaul as soon as possible.

We also discussed the need for better coordination between personnel working on cleanup efforts, power companies, local public safety agencies and fiber backhaul providers. Even if crews aren't there to dig holes or cut trees down, for example, they might inadvertently cut fiber cables that are carrying large amounts of data and voice traffic while they are attempting to clear a roadway or other area. It would be helpful to have a centralized point of communication where crews could verify they are okay to proceed with cleanup or repair work or even provide information about damage to power or backhaul of which they are aware.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's Rules, a copy of this letter is being filed electronically in the above-referenced docket. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned at (703) 433-4220.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ray Rothermel

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